Inauguration of Centre for Environmental Laws

1067. SHRI RAMDAS AGARAWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether govt.'s attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Hindustan Times of July 16, 1993, regarding inauguration of centre for Environmental Laws;

(b) if so, what are the objectives/aims/functions assigned to the Centre and likely assistance to be given by the government and the Ford Foundation during the current financial year;

(c) whether Government have finalised the draft legislation which may play an important role in enabling, implementing and monitoring the environmental situation and also set up Environment Tribunals for expeditious assessment of damage caused by accidents arising out of hazardous substances etc; and

(d) if so, whether the Bill would be brought before Parliament during the Monsoon Session?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Minister for Environment & Forests inaugurated the Centre for Environmental Laws on 15th July, 1993.

The objectives of the Centre are to develop a central repository of legal information, monitoring, implementation of Environmental Laws and organise policy research for formulation or amendment to Environmental Laws at National, Regional and International levels. The Centre intends to serve the needs of India, South Asia and developing countries in general. The Centre will have six units—education, networking, litigation, publication and media, information and liberery units.

Financial assistance to the Centre has been sought from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ford Foundation. The Ministry has given the Centre a sum of Rupees Twenty eight thousand, for preparation of a report on the Legal Action Plan for ratification of the 1992 Bio-diversity convention.

(c) and (d) A bill to provide for strict liability for damages arising out of any accident occurring while handling any hazardous substance and for the establishment of a National Environment Tribunal for effective and expeditious disposal of cases arising from such accident with a view to giving relief and compensation for damages to persons, property and the environment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto has been introduced in Parliament on 18th August, 1992 and is due for consideration and passing.

Montreal Protocol

1068. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of EVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is preparing a programme to outline a time-bound strategy to phase out Ozone depleting substances as per the programmes of the Montreal Protocol; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and

(b) India is a signatory to the Montreal Protocol which makes it mandatory for the country to phase out Ozone depleting substances by the year 2010. The incremental costs of the phase out are to be met from the Multilateral Fund and for this purpose, it is essential for the country to prepare a Country Programme providing necessary data as well as the country's strategy for the phase out. This Ministry is in the process of preparing the Country Programme.

Expansion of Farm Forestry in Big Way

1069. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to expand Farm Forestry in a big way; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the amount earmarked therefor during the Eighth Plan; State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS-(SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Integrated Forestry Project in Gujarat

1070. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state: